The EARTH CRY

THEODOSIA GARRISON

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THE EARTH CRY

AND OTHER POEMS

The EARTH CRY
and other Poems

By

THEODOSIA GARRISON

New York
MITCHELL KENNERLEY
1910

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TO

THE LOVELY MEMORY

OF

MARTHA JORDAN FISHEL

M.C.W. Feb. 6 '11.

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THE EARTH CRY

THE EARTH CRY

[*A Spirit and an Angel*]

THE SPIRIT

HOW blue the sky is and how sweet the air!
  Sister, is this a meadow where we stray?
See where the blossoms break, and over there
  Surely a bird is singing. Yesterday
I had not thought that Heaven was like this.

THE ANGEL

Now was it yesterday?

THE SPIRIT

  I only know
I have gone gently on from bliss to bliss;
  I am too glad for laughter; nay, I grow
Silent from very peace of comforting.
  Yet, sometimes, like a memory of pain,
A shadow of a grief, there seems to sting
  A vague, insistent sorrow, like a strain
Of some lost melody that haunts and stays.

THE ANGEL

Men call it " Fear o' Death."

THE SPIRIT

A thing less rife
With fear it is, yet keener.

THE ANGEL

In the ways
Of little earth men call it " Love o' Life."

THE SPIRIT

" Men call it ' Love o' Life'." Perchance so, I
May not remember. Now the bird has ceased,
How still it is! How bluer than the sky
These blossoms are!

THE ANGEL

Our feet bend not the least
Light petal of them. Nay, why stay you, sweet?

THE SPIRIT

Once I knew eyes as blue—I wonder where!
Why, as I bent just now they seemed to meet
My own again, and sudden strangely bare
And empty seemed my arms! What means this thing?

THE ANGEL

I may not say.

THE SPIRIT

I am so happy—yet
Something within me seems to turn and cling
To some past joy I might not quite forget.
Hark! Heard you nothing then?

THE ANGEL

I heard not, I.
Perchance a bird sang.

THE SPIRIT

Ah, it was not gay.
So sad it was—a little wistful cry,
A little cry from very far away,
So weak, so pitiful. O, I would go
Where the voice calls me!

THE ANGEL

Sweet, it may not be.

THE SPIRIT

Hark! there it comes again. Ah, heard you?

THE ANGEL

No.
Turn and forget. Are you not happy? See
Where the path leads to newer, lovelier things
That you have yet to find. Nay, touch my hand.

THE SPIRIT

O, must I follow?

THE ANGEL

As a bird that wings
Its way from height to height, from touch of land
To the blue distances of joy we go.

THE SPIRIT

How beautiful it is! How bright the way!
I know not what it was that hurt me so
A moment since.

THE ANGEL

And are you happy?

THE SPIRIT

Yea,
With a new peace, a comfort that was not
All mine before. Sister, what means it, say?

THE ANGEL

That God is good and you have quite forgot.

THE PRODIGAL

WHEN I came to you banned, dishonored,
Brother of yours no more,
And raised my hands where your roof-tree stands,
Why did you open the door?

When I came to you starving, thirsting,
Beggared of aught but sin,
Why did you rise with welcoming eyes
And lift me and bid me in?

You have set me first at your feast,
You have robed me in tenderness,
Yet, Brothers of mine, these tears for sign
That I would your grace were less.

For I had not been crushed by your hate,
Who courted the pain thereof;
But you stab me through when you give anew,
O Brothers, your love—your love!

THE NEIGHBORS

At first cock-crow
The ghosts must go
Back to their quiet graves below.

AGAINST the distant striking of the clock
I heard the crowing cock,
And I arose and threw the window wide;
Long, long before the setting of the moon,
And yet I knew they must be passing soon—
My neighbors who had died—
Back to their narrow, green-roofed homes that wait
Beyond the churchyard gate.

I leaned far out and waited—all the world
Was like a thing impearled,
Mysterious and beautiful and still;
The crooked road seemed one the moon might lay,
Our little village slept in Quaker gray,
And gray and tall the poplars on the hill;
And then far off I heard the cock—and then
My neighbors passed again.

At first it seemed a white cloud, nothing more,
Slow drifting by my door,

Or gardened lilies swaying in the wind;
Then suddenly each separate face I knew,
The tender lovers drifting two and two,
Old, peaceful folk long since passed out of mind,
And little children—one whose hand held still
An earth-grown daffodil.

And here I saw one pausing for a space
To lift a wistful face
Up to a certain window where there dreamed
A little brood left motherless; and there
One turned to where his unploughed fields lay bare;
And others lingering passed--but one there seemed
So over-glad to haste, she scarce could wait
To reach the churchyard gate!

The farrier's little maid who loved too well
And died—I may not tell
How glad she seemed. My neighbors, young and old,
With backward glances lingered as they went;
Only upon one face was all content,
A sorrow comforted—a peace untold.
I watched them through the swinging gate—the dawn
Stayed till the last had gone.

A PRAYER

LET me work and be glad,
  O Lord, and I ask no more;
With will to turn where the sunbeams burn
  At the sill of my workshop door.

Aforetime I prayed my prayer
  For the glory and gain of earth,
But now grown wise and with opened eyes,
  I have seen what the prayer was worth.

Give me my work to do
  And peace of the task well done;
Youth of the Spring and its blossoming
  And the light of the moon and sun.

Pleasure of little things
  That never may pall or end,
And fast in my hold no lesser gold
  Than the honest hand of a friend.

Let me forget in time
  Folly of dreams that I had;
Give me my share of a world most fair—
  Let me work and be glad.

THE GIFTS OF GOLD

DESIRE of joy—how keen, how keen it is!
(O, the young heart—the young heart in its Spring!)
There waits adventure on the road of bliss,
A challenge in each note the free birds fling;
The spur of pride, the urge to climb and kiss—
Desire of joy—how keen, how keen it is!

Desire of tears—but this is sweet, most sweet.
(O, the young heart—the young heart in its Spring!)
That sits a little while at Sorrow's feet
And tastes of pain as some forbidden thing;
That draught where all things sweet and bitter meet—
Desire of tears—ah me, but it is sweet!

Desire of joy and tears—ah, gifts of gold!
(O, the young heart—the young heart in its Spring!)
Once only are these treasures in our hold,
Once only is the rapture and the sting,
And then comes peace to tell us we are old—
Desire of joy and tears—ah, gifts of gold!

THE FAUN

THE Faun that haunts my fountain
  Within the garden close,
Is neighbor to the lily
  And comrade of the rose,
And all about his dwelling place
  The great oaks toss their blows.

The Faun that haunts my fountain—
  I hear his song all day—
A melody made whimsical,
  A careless note and gay,
Mocking the bird that dips and flings
  His host a roundelay.

The Faun that haunts my fountain
  Makes secret of what whim
Led him from woods Ionian,
  Through unknown paths and dim,
To make an English garden
  The chosen home of him.

The Faun that haunts my fountain—
  But I alone have guessed
The reason of his coming,

The meaning of his quest:
He seeks a vanished dryad,
A nymph Pan loved the best.

O Faun within my fountain,
Last of your lovely race,
I know what makes my garden close
Your fragrant dwelling place.

* * *

I saw who leaned above your brink
One noon to see her face.

O Faun within my fountain,
I watch you day by day,
I know your pagan ecstasy
When Lydia comes your way,
What time you stretch white arms to her
And kiss her lips with spray.

BALLAD OF THE SAINT

THE Little Cherubs whispered,
  "What strange new soul is this
Who cometh with a robe besmirched
  Unto the Place of Bliss?"
Then spake the Eldest Angel,
  "The robe he wears is fair—
The groping fingers of the poor
  Have held and blessed him there."

The Little Cherubs whispered,
  "Who comes to be our guest
With dust about his garments' hem
  And stains upon his breast?"
Then spake the Eldest Angel,
  "Most lovely is the stain—
The tears of those he comforted
  Who may not weep again."

The Little Cherubs whispered,
  "What strange new soul is he
Who cometh with a burden here
  And bears it tenderly?"
Then spake the Eldest Angel,
  "He bears his life's award—
The burden of men's broken hearts
  To place before the Lord."

"The dust upon his garments' hem—
  My lips shall bow to it;
The stains upon the breast of him
  Are gems thrice exquisite.
O, little foolish Cherubs,
  What truth is this ye miss,
There comes no saint to Paradise
  Who cometh not like this!"

THE VOICE OF LOVE

IT was Love who called me, a morning in the meadow,
"Come out, sweetheart! Come out, sweetheart, the Spring is in the land.
All the world is wonderful with dappled sun and shadow,
Here I wait with happiness held close in either hand."

O, I brake my spinning off,
Eager to be free.
Duty frowned beside the wheel,
"Do thy work!" quoth she.

It was Love who called me at noontide in the greenwood,
"Come out, sweetheart! Come out, sweetheart, and in the silence rest!
Take thine ease beneath the leaves as softly as a queen should,
Both my arms about thee and thy head upon my breast."

O, I raised my weary head,
Longing wistfully:
Duty set the wheel astir,
"Do thy work!" quoth she.

Through the gloom of twilight the nesting birds were calling—
Sick at heart I turned the wheel whom none might summon more,
When, like touch of rain in May, came sound of swift feet falling,
And lo, Love stood beside me where Duty was before!

"Since thou wouldst not at my call,
Sweet, I come to thee.
I am here to turn thy wheel
And aid thy task," quoth he.

MY friend lay stricken sore and at his side
Loudly my love and loyalty I cried,
Boasting of all that I would do and dare
For him whose welfare was my only care;
Yea, called High Heaven to witness if I lied,
And while I still protested my friend died.

Last night in dreams I watched two angels go
Through some fair garden that I seemed to know;
Burdened with blossoming bowed every tree,
And murmured one, "If these but blossoms be,
Judge when the moon of harvesting dips lows,
How wonderful the perfect fruit must show!"

To which the other smiling answered, "Nay,
This is the Garden of Fair Words men say;
A barren blossoming that may not give
Of any fruit that Love may eat and live."
And smiling both, they went upon their way.

* * *

But I awoke and hid my face from day.

'TOINETTE

SHE is so old she may not spin;
All day she sits here in the sun
And speaks no word. The children play
Across the threshold, out and in,
But I, 'Toinette, the crippled one,
I sit beside her day by day.

The village folk go to and fro,
And nod and smile, and sometimes, too,
The curé stays and chats with me.
She is so old she does not know,
Although we say her name anew
And call her gently, I and he.

The parish poor we two, and yet
The curé says, "God's children we,"
And strokes my hair and goes his way.
Then carefully, lest I forget,
I think his words again—and she
Knows what my silences would say.

Sometimes I touch her hand and tell
How the sun sets, or on the green
How the girls dance. No word I say,

Yet do I think she heeds me well.
  I dare not speak lest, having seen,
    The children mock me in their play.

And sometimes, though she never speaks,
  I know she tells me of the days
    When she too was a little maid;
And once were tears upon her cheeks,
  And clasped her hands as one who prays.
    And I—I knew for whom she prayed.

Rare comrades we. And all day long
  I sit beside her in the sun;
    The others wonder as they go—
She is so old and they so strong:
  Yet I, 'Toinette, the crippled one,
    More than they understand I know.

OLD FRIENDSHIP STREET

LOVE led me to an unknown land and fain was I to go;
From peak to peak a weary way he lures me to and fro;
On narrow ledge and dizzy height he dares my way-worn feet—
I would that I were back again to walk Old Friendship Street.

It's there one knew the level road, the even grass-grown way;
My brain grew never wildered there, my feet might never stray;
But here I quarrel for the path with every soul I meet—
I would that I were back again to walk OldFriendship Street.

It's here I find no gracious hand to close within my own,
But there one never raised a song to find he sang alone;
And always at a neighbor's hearth were kindly glass and seat—
I would that I were back again to walk Old Friendship Street.

I'm sick of awful depths and heights, I'm sick of storm
and strife;
I'll let Love lead for bolder folk and take my ease in life.
I know whose voice will hail me first, whose welcoming
be sweet—
It's I am going back again to walk Old Friendship
Street.

ILICET

[A. G.]

I THINK the gentle soul of him
  Goes softly in some garden place,
With the old smile time may not dim
  Upon his face.

He who was lover of the Spring,
  With love that never quite forgets,
Surely sees roses blossoming
  And violets.

Now that his day of toil is through,
  I love to think he sits at ease,
With some old volume that he knew
  Upon his knees.

Watching, perhaps, with quiet eyes
  The white clouds' drifting argosy;
Or twilight opening flower-wise
  On land and sea.

He who so loved companionship
  I may not think walks quite alone,

Failing some friendly hand to slip
  Within his own.

Those whom he loved aforetime, still,
  I doubt not, bear him company;
Yea, even laughter yet may thrill
  Where he may be.

A thought, a fancy—who may tell?
  Yet I who ever pray it so,
Feel through my tears that all is well;
  And this I know,—

That God is gentle to his guest,
  And, therefore, may I gladly say,
"Surely the things he loved the best
  Are his to-day."

LOVERS

I THINK perhaps my heart would be less sore
  If I need not look on lovers any more;
 If Winter only lasted all the year,
   And one could sit alone in thoughtless peace
 Beside the chimney-place, and only hear
   The wind-voice in the open sing and cease,
And gaze toward the frosted pane to know
That all beyond was loneliness and snow.

But O, the Springtime when the birds are rife
And all our little village wakes to life,
 And everywhere Spring bids them come again,
   As it does roses—all the lovers new;
 The stalwart lads who bear themselves like men,
   The wistful little maids, half women too.
I wish it were not mine to watch them meet
And note the lingering hands, the halting feet.

I wish I might not guess what words they say,
Nor what her eyes mean as she turns away.
 I wish I did not know how all day long,
   Busied about her little household cares,
 Her thoughts are music and her heart a song—
   A harmony of all Love dreams and dares.
I wish I might not think, when day grows late,
How she will lean and listen at the gate.

God knows I would not have their happiness
A lesser thing or strive to make it less;
  Only I wish it were not mine to dwell
    So close without the gates of Paradise;
  Only I wish I did not know so well
    The tenderness that springs in meeting eyes.
I think perhaps my heart would be less sore,
If I need not look on lovers any more.

WE—GROWN OLD

I WHO yesterday was young,
  Now am old instead;
All of youth a glad song sung,
  All a story said.
It was love who sang the song,
  Love the story told.
Ah, but we remember long,
  We, grown old.

Only yesterday I quaffed
  Life's enkindling wine;
Only yesterday I laughed
  Youth's light laugh divine.
It was love who played the host,
  Brimmed the cup of gold.
Ah, but we remember most,
  We, grown old.

Only yesterday my eyes
  Held Love's marvelings;
Nay, it is not Time that flies—
  Love alone has wings.
Time plods slow, in very truth;
  Love—what man may hold?
Ah, we know who filched our youth,
  We, grown old.

THE UNLIGHTED HOUSE

LOVE came to the Unlighted House
When all the world was dark and mute
As some dust-covered, stringless lute;
The bare trees shivered in the cold—
Poor trees that once knew flower and fruit;
On either hand lay heaped the snow
When silently as cravens go,
Love came to the Unlighted House.

Love came to the Unlighted House—
The windows stared like dead men's eyes
Set wide in unexplained surprise
Unkindled by the soul within;
The wide door closed on secrecies;
There came no sign to greet this guest
When in that hour unloveliest
Love came to the Unlighted House.

Love came to the Unlighted House
And raised the latch and entered there,
And room on room was coldly bare;
Cold ashes whitened on the hearth;
The dust lay white on floor and stair;
The silence threatened and appalled
When thus, unwelcomed and uncalled,
Love came to the Unlighted House.

THE UNLIGHTED HOUSE

Love came to the Unlighted House—
  A guest who tarried on his ways
  Too many nights, too many days—
    A guest despaired of and forgot.
  Time hastens whilst a god delays.
      To empty rooms and desolate,
      Penitent, wistful, over-late,
        Love came to the Unlighted House.

WOULD IT HAD BEEN MINE ENEMY

WOULD it had been mine enemy
Who came a secret way—
O, but the door that waits a friend
Swings open to the day.
There stood no warder at my gate
To bid Love stand and stay.

Would it had been mine enemy
In open fight and great—
'Gainst the Belovéd who goes armed
In strength inviolate,
Or dreads lest in his hands he bear
The hungry blade of hate?

Would it had been mine enemy
Who mocked to see me low—
Better all anger than this thought
Love left to scar me so,—
My heart was naked to his hand,
His hand who gave the blow!

HEROES

WHEN I think sometimes of what wondrous fame
Hath fallen upon men of noisy deeds,
Of laurel flung for every drop that bleeds,
And grateful nations busy with a name,
I turn to those who, deaf to praise or blame,
Labor in silence for their brothers' needs,
Sowing in darkness those immortal seeds
One day to blossom in men's souls like flame.
Ah, these unrecognized, unhailed, denied,
These heroes of what land or age they be,
Who mutely anguish at the task undone,
These wonderful white Christs, not crucified
On a high place for all the world to see,—
But striving on, unnoted and alone!

THE UNREPENTANT

NOW my time has come to die,
  Good, my masters, hear,
This a sinner's litany,
  Shocking to your ear:
Life hath played for me to dance
  Up and down the line —
(Eh, I paid the fiddler, sirs,
  But the dance was fine!)

Love came swinging to my call—
  Black-eyed love and bold;
Gave me scarlet lips to kiss,
  Both her hands to hold.
Fast and faster fell our feet
  To the music's beat—
(Eh, I paid the fiddler, sirs,
  But the dance was sweet!)

I have danced it through the world—
  Ah, the merry tune!
Danced the red sun down the West,
  Danced away the moon.
Could I cavil at the price?
  Out on souls so mean!

(Eh, I paid the fiddler, sirs,
  But the dance was keen!)

Beggared now, my masters all,
  Cry your cold dispraise;
Raise your eyes and count your gold,
  Trudge your dreary ways.
I, the pauper, richer far,
  Envy not nor pine—
(Eh, I paid the fiddler, sirs,
  But the dance—was mine!)

THE RETURN

LONG, long he stood and watched alone
  Her lighted window-pane,
As though it were Love's face that shone
  Upon his grief again.

A vagrant in the village street,
  One with the rain and night,
Bird-like he felt his wild heart beat
  And burn against the light.

AFTERWARD

I SAID, "The bitterness of grief is gone;
Henceforward I will only think of her
As one too glad for selfish tears to stir—
A saint who touched and blessed me and passed on;
My angel evermore to bend and take
My broken prayers to God for love's dear sake."

"The bitterness of grief is passed," I said;
Then turned and saw about me everywhere
The dear, accustomed things her touch made fair;
Her books—the little pillow for her head,
The pen her hand had dropped, the simple song
She laughed in singing when a note went wrong.

I said, "The bitterness of grief is fled,
Knowing a new saint walks in Paradise,
With peaceful heart and quiet in her eyes.
And this at last shall comfort me," I said.
But O, this song she sang, this book she knew,
This little pillow—must I brave them too?

THE Old Love kissed you and went by,
  Without the New Love stands
With roses red to crown your head,
  New roses in his hands."

I know not if she heard at all;
  I only know she bent
Above the withered blooms she held,
  As one too well content.

"In this your house grown desolate
  The chills of Winter cling;
The New Love waits without your gates
  To lead you back to Spring."

I know not if she heard at all;
  I only know she turned
Her hands above the empty hearth,
  As though the ashes burned.

The New Love singing went his way
  Across the blossomed lands—
A little lad with Springtime glad
  And roses in his hands.

I know not if she heard at all;
  I only know she pressed,
As mothers might a little child,
  The dead rose to her breast.

THE CHILD

I HEARD her crying in the night,—
So long, so long I lay awake,
Watching the moonlight ebb and break
Against the sill like waves of light.

I tried to close my eyes nor heed
And lie quite still—but oh, again
The little voice of fright and pain
Sobbed in the darkness of her need.

Strange shadows led me down the stair;
Creaked as I went the hollow floor;
I drew the bolts and flung the door
Wide, wide and softly called her there.

Ah me, as happy mothers call
Through tender twilights to the gay,
Glad truant making holiday
Too long beyond the evenfall.

The garden odors drifted through,
The scent of earth and box and rose,
And then, as silently as those,
A little wistful child I knew.

So small, so frightened and so cold,
  Ah, close, so close I gathered her
  Within my arms, she might not stir,
And crooned and kissed her in their hold.

As might a happy mother, when,
  Aghast for some quaint, trifling thing,
  One runs to her for comforting,
And smiles within her arms again.

All night upon my heart she lay,
  All night I held her warm and close,
  Until the morning wind arose
And called across the world for day.

The garden odors drifted through
  The open door; as still as they
  She passed into the awful day,
A little, wistful child I knew.

Think you for this God's smile may dim
  (His are so many, many dead)
  Seeing that I but comforted
A child—and sent her back to Him!

CONSCIENCE

A KNOCKING at my heart—and what art thou?
"I was the unforgiven; from your door
You spurned me once and bade me come no more.
I am the ever present suppliant now."

A famine at my heart—and what art thou?
"I was that Lazarus, of men the least,
Whom once you sent anhungered from your feast.
I am the ever present hunger now."

An aching at my heart—and what art thou?
"I was that love you chose once to deride,
Who, wounded at your threshold, fell and died.
I am the ever present longing now."

A sweetness at my heart—and what art thou?
"I was the kindly deed you quite forgot,
The joy bestowed that you remember not.
I am your Angel of Forgiveness now."

A SONG IN AUTUMN

AUTUMN, Autumn, give me of your crimson,
Give it me for courage, for the year has left me meek;
And your crimson banners flying, as the sign of your defying,
Shall dare my heart's denying the patience of the weak.

Autumn, Autumn, give me of your yellow,
Give it unto me for hope—the hope I could not hold;
For where your gold is burning I feel the dream returning,
The darling pain of yearning whose passing left me old.

Autumn, Autumn, take me to your heart so,
The bold heart, the singing heart whose strength shall make me strong;
Send my healed life faring in colors of your wearing,
Your gold and crimson bearing, against a grief too long.

THE DAY IS COME

THE day is come that I knew must be
(Nothing may trouble me any more)
Love has looked on me wistfully,
Kissed me and left me and closed the door.

Free he went—as he entered free—
But with him too went the dread I bore.
The day is come I knew must be,
Nothing may trouble me any more.

Always I knew it must come to me—
This time I have warded yet waited for,
With a heart that broke at its certainty!
O, the joy and the hope and the dread are o'er!
The day is come that I knew must be,
Nothing may trouble me any more.

"ET IN ARCADIA EGO"

A SIMPLE print upon my study wall,
I see you smile at it, my masters all,
So simple it could scarce indeed be less—
A shepherd and a little shepherdess
Who let their sheep go grazing, truant-wise,
To look a moment in each other's eyes.
"A gray-haired man of science," thus your looks,
"Why is this trifle here among his books?"
Ah, well, my answer only this shall be,
Because I too have been in Arcady.

My students give grave greeting as I pass,
Attentive following in talk or class,
Keen-eyed, clear-headed, eager for the truth;
Yet if sometime among them sits a youth
Who scrawls and stares and lets the lesson go
And puts my questions by, unheeding so,
I smile and leave his half-writ rhyme unvexed,
Guessing the face between him and the text.
A foolish thing,—so wise men might agree—
But I wrote verses once—in Arcady.

The little maid who dusts my book-strewn room,
Poor dingy slave of polish and of broom,

Who breaks her singing at my footsteps' sound,
She too her way to that lost land has found.
Last night, a moonlit night and passing late,
Two shadows started as I neared the gate,
And then a whisper, poised 'twixt mirth and awe,
"The old Professor. Mercy, if he saw!"
Ah, child, my eyes had little need to see—
I too have kissed my love—in Arcady.

My mirror gives me back a sombre face,
A gray-haired scholar, old and commonplace,
Who goes on his sedate and dusty ways,
With little thought of rosy yesterdays.
But they who know what eager joy must come
To one long exiled from a well-loved home,
When fares some kinsman from that selfsame land
To give him greeting—they may understand
How dear these little brethren needs must be
For that I too have lived in Arcady.

COMPENSATION

BECAUSE I craved a gift too great
For any prayer of mine to bring,
To-day with empty hands I go;
Yet must my heart rejoice to know
I did not ask a lesser thing.

Because the goal I sought lay far
In cloud-hid heights, to-day my soul
Goes unaccompanied of its own;
Yet this shall comfort me alone,
I did not seek a nearer goal.

O gift ungained, O goal unwon!
Still am I glad, remembering this,
For all I go unsatisfied,
I have kept faith with joy denied,
Nor cheated life with cheaper bliss.

VAGABONDS

GOD gave unto the Philistine,
  Who toils at desk and mart,
The silver pieces broad and fine
  And broidered coat and smart,
  But gave, O brothers, for our part
The roving foot and free;
  The children of the merry heart—
Life's vagabonds are we.

The elder son hath glowing hearth
  And quiet home and house;
The younger son hath all the earth
  Wherein he may carouse.
  The elder son his goodly spouse
For once and all has ta'en;
  Upon the younger's tattered blouse
More heads than one have lain.

Then ho, for stirrup and for spur,
  Across the world—away!
Nor pause to snatch a kiss from her
  We courted yesterday.
  'Tis some must dance and some must play,
Some pay and some go free.
  God keep you, sirs, who stare and stay—
Life's vagabonds are we.

THE SENDING

'TWAS God in Heaven who spake to Death
That stood beside his knee:
" O lover of all men that live,
Whose arms clasp land and sea,
Find thou on earth the weariest soul
And bear it hence to me."

It was God's messenger who went
Swift-footed on his way;
Like flame he crossed the rim of night,
Like shadow crossed the day,
And as he passed the glad dead smiled
As soothéd children may.

It was God's messenger who sped
Like blown wind through the spheres;
Across the little paths of earth,
With feet that no man hears,
He reached the portal of that place
That is the House of Tears.

It was God's messenger who stood
And watched with pitying eyes
The burning tears of those who wept,

Who heard the broken sighs
Of men who cried aloud their griefs
And mourned their miseries.

It was God's messenger who spake:
"Not theirs the gift I bring.
Behold the sorrow that is said
Becomes a little thing;
And there is solace in man's tears
That is God's comforting."

It was God's messenger who went
The little ways of earth.
The red moon smouldered in the clouds
Like fire upon a hearth,
And lo! he came unto that place
That is the House of Mirth.

It was God's messenger who heard
The laughter and the cheer.
The wine was red upon the board,
The lights burned high and clear,
And one laugh rang above the rest
That joyed men's hearts to hear.

It was God's messenger who heard
One voice above the rest—
She who was gayest in the song

And quickest with the jest,
And lo! he saw the broken heart
That ached within her breast.

It was God's messenger who bent
And touched her tenderly:
"Great is the anguish of a smile
That shows where grief should be,
And awful are the unshed tears
That never man may see."

It was God's messenger who spake
That word that no man saith;
It was the poor soul on his breast
That smiled in her last breath,
"Strove I not well?—how didst thou know
I was so weary, Death!"

THE BOOK

LIFE, I have made a book of my mistakes;
Regret hath clasped and Sin hath blotted it
And therein are my blunders clearly writ.

And therein do I find much knowledge hid—
Wisdom that layeth hold of every sense
With the strong grasp of grim experience.

And would you study with me? Nay, my friend,
Not one may read and benefit thereby
In all the world, not one—save only I.

SAINT CECILY

I KNOW not what she sang, or if she sang—
  Only I know her fingers on the keys
    Touched the gold heart of all glad harmonies
Till all my vibrant soul responsive rang;
And on a sudden, through the darkened room,
  There seemed an instant's tremor in the air
Of moving wings, and white against the gloom
  Soft faces bent to her, divinely fair;
And somewhere were white roses, and there grew
  Above her lifted head a slender ring
That glowed and vanished—and she rose, nor knew
  The reason of my awe and wondering.

O, I have seen Saint Cecily, and I
  Have breathed her roses. I, her worshiper,
Have seen the beauty of Saint Cecily
  When angels spake with her.

A SONG TO BELINDA

BELINDA in her dimity,
  Whereon are wrought pink roses,
Trips through the boxwood paths to me,
  A-down the garden closes,
As though a hundred roses came,
  ('Twas so I thought) to meet me,
As though one rosebud said my name
  And bent its head to greet me.

Belinda, in your rose-wrought dress
  You seemed the garden's growing;
The tilt and toss o' you, no less
  Than wind-swayed posy blowing.
'Twas so I watched in sweet dismay,
  Lest in that happy hour,
Sudden you'd stop and thrill and sway
  And turn into a flower.

HOW WILL IT BE?

HOW will it be when Spring comes back again,
Golden with sun and musical with rain?
I can be brave when snowdrift fills the air
To know Love dead; content that I may share
My sorrow with the gray world's patient pain.

Nay, I forgot, O foolish heart and vain,
That some day all of sunshine everywhere
Would clasp and kiss the earth to make it fair—
How will it be when Spring comes back again?

Love in my heart so many months hath lain
Like some dead flower that the frost hath slain,
I am afraid lest some delicious day,
Lo, he may quicken in the flower's way,
When May's white magic 'wilders soul and brain—
How will it be when Spring comes back again?

THE PASSING

"IS this a time for setting forth—
The driven clouds hang low,
A wolf-wind howls from out the North
Across the wastes of snow?"
" Nay, kiss me on my mouth, true wife,
The hour is come to go."

" But go you out to fight, my Lord?
Your men-at-arms sleep all—
And go you without horse and sword
To meet your foeman's call?"
" I bear another weapon, wife,
Stiff fingers let not fall."

"But go you fasting, Lord of mine,
Ere yet the feast be spread?"
" The Priest shall touch my mouth with wine,
My lips with broken bread,
That in that far place where I fare
My soul shall go full-fed."

" And whither leads the path, my Lord,
That you would take alone?"
" It leadeth to a silent ford

Unseen of moon and sun."
" And shall one point the way to you? "—
"Aye, one and only one."

" And whoso is the foe that stands
To give you battle there?"
" One with no weapon in his hands
And with his body bare,
And in his eyes the selfsame look
My saddest sin may wear.

" Now lay the cross in my two hands,
And bid the Priest begin,
Seeing I fare to Death's dark lands
To war with that my Sin,
Who stands before the door of God
And will not let me in."

THE WIFE

THE little Dreams of Maidenhood—
  I put them all away
As tenderly as mother would
  The toys of yesterday,
When little children grow to men
  Too over-wise for play.

The little dreams I put aside—
  I loved them every one,
And yet since moon-blown buds must hide
  Before the noon-day sun,
I close them wistfully away
  And give the key to none.

O little Dreams of Maidenhood—
  Lie quietly, nor care
If some day in an idle mood
  I, searching unaware
Through some closed corner of my heart,
  Should laugh to find you there.

THE CURÉ'S NIECE

SINCE Gaston kissed and rode away,
Babette sits weeping all the day,
And goes no more to fête or fair,
Who one time was the gayest there.
The curé says, and so say I,
" Love is a sorry thing to try.
" My niece," says he, "hath too much wit
Ever to give a thought to it."
"O Uncle, yea!" I cry.

Wherefore I treat the lads with scorn—
I toss my curls at maids forlorn;
Still, one May night, I chanced to see
Where Jean went walking with Marie,
And suddenly he bent—and O!
My cheek was red as hers I know.
It did not seem so *wrong,* and yet
How sad she is, that poor Babette!
And Uncle says and so say I,
" Love is a sorry thing to try."

But Easter, when I went to mass,
The miller's Raoul watched me pass
With such black eyes—I laughed and then,
I know not why—I looked again;

And when Marie and Jean came by
I felt so *sad*—I wonder why.
  And last night in the garden he—
  (Saints! had the curé chanced to see!)
" My niece," says he, " hath too much wit
Ever to give a thought to it."
    " O Uncle, yea! " I cry.

LOST GIFTS

I.

THE years we spent together—what are they
But blown dust on the wastes of yesterday?
Yet should I find my joy I must go back,
Seeking its fragments where the gray years stay.
Who knows what ghost may come the selfsame track,
Wistful, for that his live hand cast away?

II

The dream we dreamed together—it is gone
Like some frail rose a great wind falls upon,
Destroying utterly. Yet I, in truth,
Would give all golden gardens 'neath the sun
For one torn petal from that rose of youth,
And nowhere may I find one—nay, not one.

III

Perchance that happiness we have not known
Love now bestows on other lovers, grown
More worthy of a gift left unpossessed.
Those vagabonds met there beneath the blown
May Moon to-night, may wear within each breast
The joy divine that might have been our own.

TIME

WHEN I think sometimes of old griefs I had,
Of sorrows that once seemed too harsh to bear,
And youth's resolve to never more be glad,
I laugh—and do not care.

When I think sometimes of the joy I knew,
The gay, glad laughter ere my heart grew wise,
The trivial happiness that seemed so true—
The tears are in my eyes.

Time—Time the cynic—how he mocks us all!
And yet to-day I can but think him right:
Ah heart, the old joy is so tragical
And the old grief so light.

AT COLUMBINE'S WINDOW

THE moonlight to her window-sill
  Clung like a tendrilled vine
That trembles though the wind is still,
  And through the night's decline,
Stole Pierrot by the blossomed hedge,
  To sing to Columbine.

Beneath her lattice, where the rose
  Reached up to find her hand,
He waited in her garden close,
  As some white ghost might stand;
The tinkle of his mandolin
  Was wave on shell-strewn sand.

His voice was like a bird that beat
  Against her latticed pane;
His mandolin held all the sweet
  Insistence of the rain
That whispers to the drooping rose
  To rise and bloom again.

"Gold o' the moon, you are all mine, all mine,
The while I touch the hair of Columbine!
Stars o' the sky, you are all mine, all mine,
The while I watch the eyes of Columbine!

Rose o' the world, you are all mine, all mine,
The while I taste the lips of Columbine!
But while, sweetheart, you sleep and these deny,
Nor gold nor stars nor any rose have I."

The curtain at her window-sill
Quivered and stirred apace,
As one who felt her fingers thrill;
And through the narrow space
The voice of Columbine fell down
Like rose leaves on his face.

" Gold o' the moon, for him how can it be
Who stands within its glow, and will not see?
Stars o' the sky, how can he find them fair
Who will not lift his eyes to seek them there?
Rose o' the world, how may he know its power
Who will not dare the thorn to wear the flower? "

The moonlight on her window-sill
Bent low to lift him high;
The roses of their tender will
Were hands to help him by;
The tender arms of Columbine
Were wings that he might fly.

* * *

The sudden sun danced up the lawn,
  The wind came keen and fine;
One singing through the hedge has gone
  Against the sunrise line;
And on his lips, like some red rose,
  The kiss of Columbine.

•

THE HILLS

O MY Soul, let us go unto our hills,
We were native to them one day, you and I—
Less dwellers of the earth than of the sky
Where the holy sense of silence stays and stills,
Like a hand of benediction lifted high.

We have stayed in this market-place too long;
We have bartered with the birth-right in our breast;
We have shamed us with buffoonery and jest,
Nor raised our eyes to where our hills were strong,
Above this petty region of unrest.

O, my Soul, let us go unto our hills,
To their wonderful, high silence and their might,
Where the old dreams shall whisper us by night
Till the sullen heart within us stirs and thrills,
And wakes to weep and wonder and delight.
O my Soul, let us go unto our hills.

HARVEST

O I saw her at the time of the sowing of the grain—
The April sun had broken through a filmy mist of rain,
And a little wind and sweet
Swayed the grasses at her feet
As I turned to look and turned to smile and turned to look again;
And I said, "How good a thing
Is the promise of the Spring—"
At the time of the sowing of the grain.

O, I kissed her at the time of the growing of the grain—
Her laugh was like the melody that threads the lark's refrain;
Bud and blossom everywhere
Sent their perfume through the air
And the branches bent above her with their golden Autumn gain—
And I said, "Lo, Love hath grown
Like the seeds thy hand hath sown—"
At the time of the growing of the grain.

HARVEST

O, I won her at the time of the mowing of the grain—
We guided o'er the empty fields the heavy-laden wain,
  And my life was like to sing
  With the joy of harvesting—
O, Love's sowing nor his growing nor his mowing were
      in vain!
  And I said, "Give thanks, my heart,
  For the store that is thy part—"
At the time of the mowing of the grain.

THE BALLAD OF THE ANGEL

"WHO is it knocking in the night
That fain would enter in?"
"The ghost of Lost Delight am I,
The sin you would not sin,
Who comes to look in your two eyes
And see what might have been."

"O long ago and long ago
I cast you forth," he said,
"For that your eyes were all too blue,
Your laughing mouth too red,
And my torn soul was tangled in
The tresses of your head."

"Now mind you with what bitter words
You cast me forth from you?"
"I bade you back to that fair Hell
From whence your breath you drew,
And with great blows I broke my heart,
Lest it might follow too.

"Yea, from the grasp of your white hands
I freed my hands that day,
And have I not climbed near to God,

As these his henchmen may?"
"Ah man—ah man, 'twas my two hands
That led you all the way."

"I hid my eyes from your two eyes
That they might see aright."
"Yet think you 'twas a star that led
Your feet from height to height?
It was the flame of my two eyes
That drew you through the night."

With trembling hands he threw the door,
Then fell upon his knee:
"O Vision, armed and cloaked in light,
Why do you honor me?"
"The Angel of your Strength am I
Who was your sin," quoth she.

"For that you slew me long ago
My hands have raised you high;
For that mine eyes you closed, mine eyes
Are lights to lead you by;
And 'tis my touch shall swing the gates
Of Heaven when you die!"

ILLUMINATION

LAST night I dreamed of you. I thought you came
And caught my hands in yours and said my name
Over and over, till my soul was stirred
With that fine ecstasy that some wild bird
May know when first he feels the blossoming
And the keen rapture of the glad new Spring.

Almost to-day I fear to meet your eyes
Lest I should find them suddenly grown wise
With knowledge of my heart; almost I fear
To touch your hand lest you should come too near,
And startled, dazed by some fierce inner light,
We both should cry, "I dreamed a dream last night!"

PAN

MOST good it is that Pan is dead:
We be a sad and sullen folk
Who bend beneath a strange god's yoke
And grind our hearts for daily bread.

To him what sadness has been spared,
Who died before the world was old
Nor saw his forests bought and sold,
His shy, fleet wood-mates slain and snared.

Who died remembering the dim
Cool twilights when his clear pipes drew
The sweetest songster of the crew
To shrill an answer back to him.

Who, dead, remembers only this;
The darkling river's moonlit space
Wherefrom the white-limbed naiad's face
Lifted its wet red lips to his.

What man would wish him life—to see
His happy river made a slave;
His sleek, wild creatures, fierce and brave,
Heart-broken in captivity?

To know his nymphs and satyrs fled;
  To see a stern God's altar made
  Where once the crew of Bacchus played;
To know his forest mute with dread.

O, well that Pan is dead—that he
  Hath missed all knowledge of the gray
  Shadow of this bleak afterday,
And little mirth of gods that be!

A CITY VOICE

OUTSIDE here in the city the burning pavements lie,
There's heat and grime and blown black dust to help the day go by,
There's the groaning of the city like a goaded, beaten beast;—
I know a place where God's great trees go up to meet His sky
Like an army green with banners, and a happy wind released,
Goes swinging like a merry child among the branches high.

Outside here in the city there's a poison in the air—
The fevered, heavy hand o' heat that smites and may not spare;
There's little comfort in the night—there's torment in the day;—
I know a place where cool and deep the quiet lake lies bare,
All day about its shaded brink the wild birds dart and play,
And willows dip their finger-tips like dainty ladies there.

O, the heart of me is hungering for my own, own place,
I'm tortured with the slaying heat, the dizzy headlong
race.
O, for the soft, cold touch of grass about my tired feet,
The breath of pine and cedar blown against my weary
face,
The lip-lap of the water like a little song and sweet,
And God's green trees and God's blue skies above me for
a space.

LOVE LORE

NOW when I see your face, sweetheart, I know
What the rose feels that through the chilling night
Yearns for the sun, despairingly, when lo!
The sudden warmth, the glorious, great light!

Now when I hear your voice, sweetheart, I know
What the rose feels that drought hath almost slain,
That, thirsting, droops disconsolate, when lo!
The swift, cold air, the rapture of the rain!

LOST SUMMER

MY heart hath its Springtime, yea,
  Its thrill of primal happiness,
Its swift, keen days of gold and gray,
  Its crescent moon of promises.

My heart hath had its Winter, O
  The barren land, the empty ways,
The awful silence of the snow
  Through the untrodden nights and days!

Alas, my heart that might not know
  The sweet, deep peace of Summer's prime!
Only for you the crushing snow
  And Spring's unrest in blossom time.

THE KING'S KISS

WE rode through the shouting town;
  She clung to the edge of the crowd
Like a crescent moon slipped down
  The stormy black of a cloud.

Scarce missing my horse's feet
  By a turn of the hand and head;
And O, but her face was sweet,
  And O, but her mouth was red!

I stooped from the saddle swift
  As a swooping hawk through the brine
Pierces to strike and lift,
  And I touched her lips with mine.

For a second's fleeting space
  I captured the flame of her eyes,
The quick, hot blush of her face,
  Her wondering, mute surprise.

But a look, a touch, and then—
  Spurred on to the thundering
Of the thousand cries of men
  Who hailed their anointed king.

Was she maiden, was she wife,
  Was she wanton, or bold or shy?
What matter, we plucked from life
  An ecstasy—she and I.

In the moment's little space
  Or for well or ill was it done—
The girl of the market place
  And the crownéd king were one.

In purple the young Queen goes—
  Like a flower of snow, her face;
Ah me, for the wild red rose
  I kissed in the market place!

ALL SOULS' DAY

WITHIN the church on All Souls' Day
I knelt with those uncomforted,
Who bowed their weary heads to pray
Their sad prayers for the happy dead.

We, with the sting of tears still hot
Upon our faces, prayed for those
Who have forgot all tears, forgot
The long passed pageant of old woes.

We of the anxious soul and brain,
Prayed peace for those who ever dwell
In that great calm that follows pain,
Safe-housed in God's white citadel.

O, futile, tender mockery!
We, hampered, fettered in the strife,
To pray for those glad souls made free
Of the great burden that is life.

Dear God, another prayer I said;
Humbly I asked who might not give:
Pray ye for us, thrice happy dead,
For us who live—for us who live!

ONLY a little book of singing rhymes
Yet, when I read, there sudden seemed to ring
Soft to my ears the distant caroling
And happy note of silver-hearted chimes
That pealed in some Arcadian morning-tide
When like a rose on roses came the bride.

I know one morning, when the world was young
And Spring was like a maiden garbed in green,
Some Amaryllis turned to look and lean
When melodies like these her shepherd sung;
So clear, so delicate that scarce a bird
Could flute an answer to the notes he heard.

I think the great god Pan one day in mirth
Piped him a song too fine and exquisite
For weight of years to crush and silence it;
Too sweet to vanish wholly from the earth,
It loitered long in alien ways apart,
To spring at last in this new singer's heart.

THE BARRED DOOR

ONE night upon mine ancient enemy
  I closed my door,
And lo! that night came Love in search of me—
  Love I had hungered for—
And finding my door closed, went on his way,
  And came no more.

Pray you take counsel of this penitent,
  And learn thereof:
Set your door wide whatever guests be sent,
  Your graciousness to prove;
Better to let in many enemies
  Than bar out Love.

EXORCISM

SHE who one day was my guest
  Shall be guest no more;
Dark the room that knew her best,
  Closed and barred the door;
Every casement locked to her
Who was Sorrow's messenger.

Now forbidden is the place
  That she knew of old,
Nevermore her gloomy face
  Peers to scoff or scold,
With her cracked voice pitched to wheeze
Tales of drear despondencies.

O, she made this hearth of mine
  Like a funeral;
'Neath her eyes the fire's bright shine
  Seemed to fade and fall;
When the sun was gold, her gloom
Made a shadow in the room.

EXORCISM

Overlong she sat with me
  Ere time made me wise,
Hearing in her company
  Thrice told tales and lies
Of old miseries that grew,
Even as she told them, new.

Be it lack of courtesy,
  Be it fault or sin,
Nevermore to mine and me
  Shall she enter in,
Nevermore my hands shall press
Thine, O crone Unhappiness!

Light the lamps and set the feast,
  Bid the music start,
O ye joys or great or least
  Crowded from my heart,
Now I bid the dance begin—
Pray ye laugh and enter in.

Enter in, while Time endures,
  Merry joys of earth,
Heart and house and home are yours,
  Yours are roof and hearth.
Greet me, pledge me cup to lip
In your old-time fellowship.

I am free who once was slave,
  Pray ye, friends, carouse
That this creature of the grave
  Is forbid my house.
Laughter, lift your lips to me—
Kiss me, blue-eyed Comedy!

THE ASPEN TREE

THE little aspen tree stands high
  Upon the hill that guards the lane;
Her leaves are green as emeralds,
  Her prattle is like dancing rain.
She gossips to the wind, the sky,
And we are comrades, she and I.

I climb the hill at evenfall;
  She stands so high she may look down
And whisper me if you have turned
  The winding highway from the town,
And in the wind's arm bend to see
And murmur that you haste to me;

And with her hundred voices tell
  Each step you take to reach my side,
And laugh in merry mockery,
  Pretend to scold and weep and chide,
And stand a moment mute in grief,
Then laugh with every rustling leaf.

And when at last you take my hands
  And call my name, in mimicry
She chatters it a dozen times;
  And then in gay and elfish glee
Attunes her happy leaves to this—
The lisping cadence of a kiss.

THE WELCOMING

WE were alone what time you said
Your last farewell to me,
Ere yet you joined the happy dead
In their fair company.

God send our meeting be like this
In Heaven's loneliest ring,
Lest angels envy us the bliss
Of that first welcoming.

A WOMAN

THE great love that was not for her
  Passed on, nor paused to see
The wistful eyes, the hands' vague stir,
  The mouth's mute misery.

The little love she recked not of
  Crept closer bit by bit,
Until for very lack of love,
  She smiled and welcomed it.

Not hers to choose, to weigh and part
  The greater from the less;
She only strove to fill a heart
  That ached with emptiness.

THE BALLAD OF THE SCULLION MAID

IT was the little scullion maid
Whose willing hands served them,
Who served the noble guests and fine
With store of meat and poured out wine
In the inn at Bethlehem.

The night was full of stinging rain,
The mad wind drove in hate;
It was the little scullion maid
Who leaned into the dark and said,
"One crieth at the gate!"

"Behold, there are two travelers
And wearied they and sore!"
Then quoth the landlord at his wine,
"I trow they are no guests of mine—
My inn will hold no more.

"Now for a king small room might be,
But none for such as they.
Let them begone, or, for a jest,
Bid them among my kine to rest
Until the break of day."

It was the little scullion maid
  Who slipped into the night
To bring the stabled travelers
The bread and bedding that were hers,
  And oil for them to light.

It was the little scullion maid
  Who braved the wind and sleet;
As through the darksome night she crept,
Sudden a great star flamed and leapt
  And led her puzzled feet.

It was the little scullion maid
  That at the stable door
Heard with a sudden awe beguiled,
The sharp cry of a little child
  Where ne'er was child before.

And it was Joseph took her gifts
  With thankful words and meet,
And low the little scullion maid
Hath knelt at Mary's side and laid
  Soft linen at her feet.

And it was Jesus of Nazareth,
  The new-born child spake He—
"My Mother, by thy throne in Heaven
Shall stand those saints whose joy is given
  To minister to thee.

"Ursula—Agnes—Magdalen—
  Whose names are loved of men,
But ever at thy own right hand
Behold, this little maid shall stand
  Thy chosen handmaiden."

It was the little scullion maid
  Whose willing hands served them,
Who served the noble guests and fine
With store of meat and poured out wine
  In the inn at Bethlehem.

A WIFE

I STRETCH out both my hands to you—
It pleased you once to call them fair;
Look now and see if anywhere
Are hands more scarred and worn than these
That lost their fairness serving you.

I lift up my two eyes to you—
It pleased you once to call them sweet;
Judge now if any eyes repeat
Their lack of light—poor eyes that wept
Their sweetness out in guarding you.

O hands and eyes once dear to you,
I would not they had served you less,
Yet hands like these who might caress,
Nor eyes like these win love again
For all their wistful prayer to you!

THE CONSOLER

TIME comes to grief as Sleep to weariness—
On silent sandals and with shadowy hair
Sleep bends to soothe the fretful daytime care,
And Time unto my grief shall do no less.
But yet a little and his hands shall press
Above the weeping eyes and close them there,
Above the trembling lips, till all despair
Lie like a sleeping child in his caress.
And when my sorrow wakes it will not be
My sorrow any more, for I shall smile,
Beholding it, to know it comforted;
No sorrow, but a gracious memory
That still may walk with me a little while
At twilight, or when April boughs are spread.

UNCONQUERED

I HAVE fallen once, I have fallen thrice,
  And my wounds are sad to see;
Yet, brothers of mine, take these for sign
  That I fought courageously.

If my comrades found it an easy thing
  To pass where I suffered sore,
Shall they hold me then to the scorn of men
  That I struggled and strove the more?

Forever God giveth his chosen wings,
  Yet the goal is set for all,
And swift and high may the wingéd fly
  Where the earth-bound needs must crawl.

And my wounds, my bleeding, my strife, my tears
  Shall cry of my victory,
For they prove each one that I did not shun
  The path that the weaklings flee.

THE LOST LAND

WE question of the Captains,
Each morning on the quay:
"Good Masters, have you ne'er a ship
That sails to Arcady?"
"North and East and South and West,
Our white sails take the wind,
But never port o' Arcady
May skipper touch or find."

O lost land and lovely land, across the leagues of foam,
Across the sea, across the sand it's we'd be winning home.
For that we chose to wander once in quest of golden gain,
Is never ship upon the sea can take us back again?

We question of the Merchants
Who trade by land and sea:
"Now pray you, Sirs, whence go the wares
You send to Arcady?"
"North and East, South and West,
We merchants buy and sell,
But where's the mart o' Arcady
Is more than man can tell."

THE LOST LAND

O lost land of dear delights, beyond our wistful gaze,
We lost the way in noisy nights, in jarred and jangling days.
For that we kissed our love good-bye to follow Pleasure's crew
Is never path about the world can lead us back to you?

We question of the Wise Men:
" Fair Sirs, of courtesy,
Now show us where the glad star lies
That shines o'er Arcady? "
" North and East and South and West,
We call the stars by name,
But never land o' Arcady
Is lighted by their flame."

O lost land of faith and truth, not all our useless tears
May bring us back the dreams of youth across the crowded years.
Nor merchants in the market place, nor skippers on the sea,
Nor craft, nor skill, nor wish, nor will lead back to Arcady.

THE LIMPING ONE

YOU had no eyes for me, my lad,
  I never met your sight
When fiddles played upon the green,
  Or girls walked out at night.

The laughing girls, the dancing girls,
  The rosy cheeks for you;
You knew the black-eye's challenging,
  The softness of the blue.

You had your pick and choice of girls,
  What call had you to face
The little, limping one that sat
  Beside the chimney-place.

O, girls enough they cried for you
  The day you said good-bye;
And yet I'm thinking there's just one
  Whose tears will never dry.

And girls enough wished well to you
  The hour you turned away;
And yet I'm thinking just one prayer
  Goes with you every day.

And if at last it aids you, lad,
  You'll never guess it came
From just the little, limping one
  You never called by name.

A PRAYER TO AZRAEL

BECAUSE thy face is more compassionate
Than God's own angel Pity, he who stands
Above the world with healing in his hands,
Early and late,
Therefore I dare to ask a little thing.
Though unto thee no man is small or great,
The humblest beggar, the anointed king
Of one estate,
Yet, O, how often, often on thy breast
The little children rest,
Feeling thy sombre arms about them close
As twilight folds a rose;
So, even I this little prayer dare bring
Unto thy pitying.

I pray thee find me not my hour to go
Closed within any dwelling men have made—
Those four poor walls where I may crouch, afraid
As from a foe;
But seek me on my hills, my hills whereon
The free winds drift and blow,
Between the green and gold of earth and sun,
Ah, find me so!
I would not quite forget, in some new birth,
The joy of this my earth,
Nor lose what time I look on Paradise,
The vision in my eyes
Of green boughs swaying in a singing wind—
O Azrael, be kind!

THE MEMORY

DOWN the little, crooked street that went to meet the sea
The torn nets were drying on the grass—
(She was mending at the old nets—she never looked at me—)
On a blue September morning with a West wind blowing free,
She never raised her head to watch me pass.
'Tis all I took away with me—a blue September morning,
The little street, the green grass and one girl's scorning.

I've forgot my Father's house—the house that saw me born—
Forgot my Mother's blessing at the last;
There's nothing but the old nets tangled-like and torn
And the head that bent above them, yellow-colored as the corn,
That never raised to watch me as I passed.
I wish I'd be forgetting it—a blue September morning,
The blowing grass, the torn nets—and one girl's scorning.

ABOVE him in the city street,
The flame of noon increased;
With tumult as when armies meet,
Life urged her great and least;
'Mid din and turmoil, dust and heat,
Went driven man and beast.
He felt the salt wind on his face,
The wet sand at his feet;
He saw the white sails lift again,
He heard the singing sailor men
Above the combers' beat;
And half the way across the world the song came clear and sweet.

Above the dismal lodging hung
The heavy heat of day;
The swarming insects buzzed and clung;
Within the gas-light's ray
Men wrangled in an alien tongue,
Or slept as cattle may.
He felt the cool of dew-damp fields,
He heard the fiddles play
The old remembered dancing tune;
He saw the white midsummer moon,
And mocking—luring—gay,
The sound of one girl's laughter came from half a world away.

THE BALLAD OF THE COMFORTING

MARY smiled on her little Son,
"Now, why hast Thou left Thy play?"
"But to touch thy hands with my hands, Mother,
Lest sometime there come a day
When I may not close them within mine own,
Though they fall as hurt doves may."

Mary smiled on her little Son,
"Now blind wouldst Thou have me go
That mine eyes Thou hast closed with kisses twain?"
"My Mother, I may not know,
But I fear a day when they look on pain
And I may not close them so."

Mary smiled on her little Son,
Close, close in her arms pressed He:
"O Mother, my Mother, my heart on thine
Lest sometime a day may be
When I may not comfort nor make it whole,
Though it break for love of me."

Now think you that on Calvary's hill
Whereon her Son was slain,
She felt upon her eyes that touch
That veiled them unto pain,
And filled her groping hands, and bade
Her torn heart beat again?

A PARABLE

ONE had the marble ready to his hand,
And cunning instruments to cut and shape,
And made a form of beauty and command.

And one toiled wearily, long day by day,
With nothing for his tools but naked hands,
And nothing for his work but common clay.

And all men bowed before the marble form,
And hailed him master who had done this thing;
And at the clay they mocked with jest and scorn.

And one walked proudly, crowned with men's acclaim;
And one sat sullen, muttering in his beard,
"Behold! I did my best; whose then the blame?"

THE VICTOR

THE live man victorious
Rode spurring from the fight;
In a glad voice and glorious
He sang of his delight
And dead men three, foot-loose and free,
Came after in the night.

And one laid hand on his bridle-rein—
Swift as the steed he sped—
"O, ride you fast, yet at the last,
Hate faster rides," he said.
"My sons shall know their father's foe
One day when blades are red."

And one laid hand on his stirrup-bar
Like touch o' driven mist,
"For joy you slew ere joy I knew
For one girl's mouth unkissed,
At your board's head, at mass, at bed,
My pale ghost shall persist."

And one laid hands on his own two hands,
"O Brother o' mine," quoth he,
"What can I give to you who live

Like gift you gave to me?
Since from grief and strife and ache o' life
Your sword-stroke made me free."

The live man victorious
Rode spurring from the fight;
In a glad voice and glorious
He sang of his delight,
And dead men three, foot-loose and free,
Came after in the night.

A SONG OF LOVE

LOVE laid his hands on my two hands
  And straightway I was strong;
He held my eyes within his eyes
  That they might see no wrong;
His kisses fell upon my lips
  And left them filled with song.

The meanest task my hands may do
  For Love's sake now is meet;
The meanest thing my eyes may see
  Grows wondrous and complete;
And since my songs are all of him,
  Love, must not they be sweet?

[To Seumas MacManus]

THAT was never a book that you brought me and gave
to my hand—
'Twas a wind sighing and a wave lifting,
And the sight of a red moon drifting
O'er a far-off land.

That was never a thing of words that you brought and
bade me know—
'Twas a bugle blowing, a flame burning,
And the gleam of a swift lance turning
To the flying foe.

That was never a printed rhyme that you brought and
bade me see—
'Twas a child's laughter and a bride's sighing,
A saint's faith and a strong man's dying,
That you gave to me.

TWO CREEDS

INSIDE the temple door the sullen light
  Fell on the mouthing man, who, stern and drear,
Poured down upon the listening crowd the blight
  Of his believing, " Find thy God through fear! "

But out within the green, beneath the blue,
  Deep in the heart of nature's festival,
" Love! Love! " the glad birds caroled as they flew,
" O Love! Love! Love!" they sang, " For that is all."

THE PRISONERS

THAT which we were forever stands between
Ourselves and that we would be. With frail hands,
Cold upon either's wrist, an Old Year stands
And holds us prisoners for what has been;
And pitiful her eyes that needs must screen
Our restless eyes that turn toward unseen lands
And strange new days, and all the heart's demands
Falter and fail before her wistful mien.
Surely we need but little strength to break
This feeble hold and turn and wander free,
Each one his separate way beyond her door;
Strange that we stand here sullenly for sake
Of that brief joy she gave to you and me,
Ere Love went weeping to return no more.

"WAS it not enough," said the toad,
"To have sun and food and dirt,
But a flame that flared and glowed
Must hurtle you on to hurt?
You, with your broken wing,
Beaten and bruised and burned—
Fool to have sought the light
And found what your folly earned.
Is it not peace to rest
In the mellow mud of the road?"

* * *

"Alas, but the flame was fair!"
Said the moth to the toad.

"You have flown," said the toad, "for this,
To lie hurt and dying and torn;
You are crazed and killed with a kiss,
You are scorched by a mocking scorn,
When one has warmth and food,
And may sit and blink in the light,
That is all and enough of good.
Lie, fool, and mourn your flight!
Envy me where I squat
Unscathed in the mud of the road!"

* * *

"Alas, but the flame was sweet!"
Said the moth to the toad.

THE LITTLE GHOST

LAST night, through driven mist and beating rain,
One came whose feet had known the path before;
The little Love we buried stood again
And sobbed beside my door.

What could I do, oh foolish woman heart,
But draw him in and hold him safe and warm?
Why had Death loosed him, helpless and apart,
To wander in the storm?

O lips and hands that I have wanted most!
My arms were open! Be it wrong or right,
Who could turn such a lonely little ghost
Adrift into the night?

TWO SINS

THE sin I did for Love's sake
Lies in the soul of me,
And lights me far as some white star
Whose strength is purity.

The sin I did for Hate's sake—
Ah heart, that this should be!—
Has bound the feet that would be fleet,
The eyes that fain would see.

THE STRANGER

HE waited here among us for a fortnight and a day—
We knew as much before he came as when he went away;
'Twas he that had the dancing eyes, 'twas he that had the smile,
And the singing voice you'd follow though it led you for a mile.
The shoulders of a sergeant too for all his chin was bare—
A rovin' rangin' soldier lad from God knows where.

Christian bred or heathen bred, he left it to our whim—
The bells of twenty parishes could ring for all of him;
But, faith, he had a way with him that never came amiss—
No man that wouldn't follow him, no girl he couldn't kiss—
And always with the face of one that's stepping to a fair—
A rovin' rangin' soldier lad from God knows where.

He waited here among us for a fortnight and a day—
But here's that luck goes with you, lad, wherever you may stray;
And here's that though you choose to tramp through fifty towns or more,
The times you'll knock may always be a woman at the door.
It's you'll be sure of welcome then, as she'll be sure of care—
Me rovin' rangin' soldier lad from God knows where.

GATHERED ROSES

AS one through some belovéd garden strays
For the last time, and, lingering, stays to break
A blossom here and there for old love's sake,
So I go back through our lost yesterdays
And cull my fragrant memories—your praise
And pride of me, the songs we used to make,
The happy name you gave me. Oh, I take
So little ere I face the untried ways.
How will it be, dear, when I look on these
My gathered roses in the years to be?
Shall I behold love's garden all ablow
As once we knew it, or, as one who sees
That place he loved, deserted utterly,
Given to emptiness and wind and snow?

IRONY

YOU gave me my work to do, you brought and set it before me;
I laughed with the laughter of one, seeing, who understands;
I bent to the task elate, zeal like a mantle o'er me—
Why did you break my wrists and shatter the strength of my hands?

You gave me a song to sing, and mine the joy of the bringing
Strands of Heaven, and sea and earth strung to the perfect note.
Finished, glorious, whole, I raised my head for its singing—
Why did you seal my lips and crush the song in my throat?

The work I was fain to do—it rusts in the drift of the sands;
The song I was fain to sing is waste for the winds to float.
Why did you break my wrists and shatter the strength of my hands?
Why did you seal my lips and crush the song in my throat?

THE UNFORGOTTEN

IT is all calm this love you give to me.
My life goes gently in a cloistered hold
Whose windows open to the scanty gold
Of tender twilight on a waveless sea.
This is the joy I thought might never be,
The comfort granted and the ease untold;
This is the dream fulfilled, that in the old
Despiteful days I sought for wearily.
Oh strange, most strange, that from this peace I turn
To think of one who rode a dangerous way,
One night of winds, beneath a moon-mad sky,
Reckless as flame that leaps to cleave and burn,
A wild, glad lover speeding to obey
The mocking fate that bade him kiss and die.

A PRAYER TO LOVE

PRAY you, my master, let me keep my dream.
Of all sweet things have I not been bereft—
Of very youth, of very happiness?
Why should you covet this one fairing left?
Nay, grant me this. What slave could ask for less?
Pray you, my master, let me keep my dream.

Pray you, my master, leave to me this thing,
I, who was rich one day, to-day am poor
Beyond men's envying, save but for this,
This dream for whose glad sake I still endure;
All else you filched in that one Judas kiss.
Pray you, my master, leave to me this thing.

Pray you, my master, let me keep my dream.
O Love, I gave to you so much, so much—
Desire of joy, yea, and desire of tears—
Leave me this one dear solace in my touch,
This little lamp to light the desolate years.
Pray you, my master, let me keep my dream.

A FADING ROSE

THIS was the rose that yesterday
Made my nook of the garden gay;
Bonnie and blithe and debonair,
Kissed of the sun and summer air,
Sweet coquette in a ruffled dress,
Glad of life and its loveliness.
Would I had thought it greater sin
Thus to pluck it and bring it in,
Here where the dusk of the sunless room
Blurred its beauty and killed its bloom,
Till none would say this drooping thing
Once was merriest child of Spring.
Only a fading rose, and yet,
Wakes in my heart a strange regret,
Such as might come if one should see
Columbine in her tragedy,
Or a laughter-loving, little Pierrette,
A sob in her throat and her blue eyes wet.

UNSHRIVEN

I HAVE paid well for every sin
  And blotted out the score;
So great I made my punishment—
  Not God could make it more.

But these no man calls sin—too small
  For penance or regret—
The tardy thought, the careless kiss,
  The groping hand unmet.

The sorrow that I left unsoothed,
  The word I left unsaid,—
Ah me! I know what ghosts must stand
  About my dying bed.

A MEMORY

YOU came into my life for one brief day,
Gave me the laughter of your lips and eyes,
Touch of your hand in mine, then turned away,
Yet left these memories.

Ah child, you brought strange sunlight to my gloom;
So carelessly you gave a thing so fair,
As though one passed through some closed, haunted room,
And dropped a flower there.

THE LAST GIFT

I LEAVE this book for you, O friend of mine,
  To speak for me that day my lips are dumb;
  A silent messenger I bid it come
To gain the welcome I must needs resign.
I pray you on that night you miss me most,
  That night when most you crave a word of me,
Beside your fire and once again my host,
  Open this book and greet me silently;
And read the poem that the worn page shows
  I loved the best, and linger on the line
I marked there, as to say, "Lo, once a rose
  I closed here for your finding, that was mine."
And otherwhere, I know that you will say,
  "Perchance she smiled here," and your smile will break
  Upon your lips for our old laughter's sake,
And I shall hear, though very far away.
And in your reading if perchance you see
  Upon one page a stain a tear might leave,
I doubt not our two hands may meet and cleave
  Once more in their old bond of sympathy.
Yea, in the mists of that dim borderland,
  Beyond our wildered thought of time and space,
I think our souls a little while may stand
  And look a moment in each other's face.

THE PAGAN SOUL

YOU who were born for laughter and the bright
Gold sun of morning and white fire at night,
Whose voice is tuned to that delicious speech
The dryads use when calling each to each
Across keen mornings when the Spring is new
And high, white clouds drift bird-like in the blue:—

You who were born for music and for mirth—
A mad, glad soul sent jubilant to earth—
What strange fate set you a bewildered thing,
Prisoned in this dim House of Suffering,
Placed in the midst of those grown sadly wise,
With that mute, frightened wonder in your eyes?

How still you sit what time there ring without
Echoes of distant merriment and shout!
How still you sit what time the wind elate
Calls at your casement for his glad-heart mate,
And the red moon comes flaming up the sky,
Like a great torch to set strange revels by!

O child, we mortals knowing whence 'tis sent,
Bring certain wisdom to sore punishment;
We ease the anguish as we weigh the loss.
But you, O sweet my Pagan, to this cross,
Wondering, wildered, fettered foot and hand,
Why are you bound who may not understand?

YOUTH

LIFE in the Book of Lovers bade me look.
Oh, much of heart-break in the pages lay—
Long grief and fierce, fair joy that lasts a day!
All this I read before I closed the book.

"Now art thou warned," quoth Life, "what loving is.
Filled with this wisdom, whither dost thou go?"
Then I, 'twixt awful tears and laughter, "Lo,
I go to add another page to this!"

THE ANNUNCIATION

GOD whispered and a silence fell; the world
Poised one expectant moment like a soul
Who sees at Heaven's threshold the unfurled
White wings of cherubim, the sea impearled,
And pauses, dazed, to comprehend the whole;
Only across all space God's whisper came
And burned about her heart like some white flame.

Then suddenly a bird's note thrilled the peace,
And earth again jarred noisily to life,
With a great murmur as of many seas.
But Mary sat with hands clasped on her knees,
And lifted eyes with all amazement rife,
And in her heart the rapture of the Spring
Upon its first sweet day of blossoming.

RECRIMINATION

SO long you walked upon the selfsame way—
The crooked paths of many a night and day—
You, who have passed the pitfalls and the snares,
Could you not warn me where I went astray?

O child, did I not call—my fears, my prayers
Drowned in your laughter, jubilant and gay.

Now, from the happy heights whereon you stand,
Why could you not have stretched a guiding hand,
Or pointed but a pathway for my feet
That stumbled blindly in this unlit land?

O child, you found your gypsying so sweet,
What, though I strove, you would not understand!

Nay, but some mark you might have left behind,
Some token that my frightened eyes might find;
Some little sign to bid me know and stay
And find my pathway ere the day declined.

O child, my feet were bleeding all the way,
Yet to their stains so blind you were—so blind!

Now, if some day I gain my goal indeed,
Will I find solace for my want and need?
Ah, surely never evil may befall
As sore as these sad wounds wherewith I bleed!

O child, you too must know the worst of all—
To cry to one beloved who will not heed.

THE MOTHER

SHE will remember when they forget—
I knew it so in the hour I died;
The oil was touched and the candle set
And the woman I worshiped sobbed beside;
And the friend I had loved and deified
Hid his face where the tears were wet.

And the Mother who bore me spake no word,
But the break of her heart was the last I heard.

Oh, life was good in the world I knew—
Shall I be sad that they find it such?
My friend hath gained him a friend as true—
The wife of me thrills to a new hand's touch.
(Oh, but the dead forgive so much!)
Tears are forgotten and grief is through.

And the Mother who bore me—only she
Hides her face on the grave of me.

A RAINY DAY

[TO D. B. P.]

THIS is my dream, to have you on a day
Of beating rain and sullen clouds of gloom,
Here with me, in the old familiar room,
Watching the logs, beneath the flames' swift play,
Burst into strange conceits of bud and bloom.

The things we know about us here and there,
The books we love half-read on floor and knee,
The stein the Dutchman brought from over-sea,
Standing invitingly beside your chair;
The while we quote and talk and—disagree.

Rebuild the castles that we reared in Spain,
Re-read the poet that our childhood knew,
With eyes that meet when some quaint thought rings true—
O friend, for some such day of cheer and rain,
Books, and the dear companionship of you!

KNOWLEDGE

BECAUSE she stepped into my heart one day,
Where never a step before might win,
I know what grace fills an empty place
When the Well Belovéd comes in.

Because she went out from my heart one day,
I know as never another one,
The lonely gloom of a crowded room
When the Well Belovéd has gone.

A PRAYER

I DO not pray for peace,
  Nor ask that on my path
The sounds of war shall shrill no more,
  The way be clear of wrath.
But this I beg thee, Lord,
  Steel thou my will with might,
And in the strife that men call life,
  Grant me the strength to fight.

I do not pray for arms,
  Nor shield to cover me.
What though I stand with empty hand,
  So it be valiantly!
Spare me the coward's fear—
  Questioning wrong or right:
Lord, among these mine enemies,
  Grant me the strength to fight.

I do not pray that Thou
  Keep me from any wound,
Though I fall low from thrust and blow,
  Forced fighting to the ground;
But give me wit to hide
  My hurt from all men's sight,
And for my need the while I bleed,
  Lord, grant me strength to fight.

A PRAYER

I do not pray that Thou
  Shouldst grant me victory;
Enough to know that from my foe
  I have no will to flee.
Beaten and bruised and banned,
  Flung like a broken sword,
Grant me this thing for conquering—
  Let me die fighting, Lord!

THE WEDDING BONNET

SHE tied her wedding bonnet on—
  The rosy bow beneath her chin,
And all the little birds outside
Burst into chorus for the bride—
  Ah, how she thrilled to hear within!

She tied her wedding bonnet on—
  Her mirror was one flattery;
The roses at the bonnet's brim
Seemed all her passing thoughts of him
  Transformed to pink reality.

She tied her wedding bonnet on
  With soft and tender fingering,
And thought whose strong brown hands would so
Bend to untie the dainty bow,
  Then blushed as if she felt the ring.

LABOR

THERE is a potion of forgetfulness
As wonderful as sleep and exquisite,
And he who once hath drunk his full of it
Loses his sometime heart-break and distress;
No Lethe this, yet in its depths no less
Lies Peace. And Life, who brewed this cup with wit,
Hath called it "Labor," and those men who sit
About his board, drink deep and laugh and bless.
Drink and forget the burden of old sighs;
Drink, and behold, the world is glorious!
This was God's plan; this wondrous gift and glad
He gave to Adam, losing Paradise,
"Behold, I bid you labor!" Yea, and thus
Saved the first man, perchance, from going mad.

THE SPRING CALL

WHAT was it made me drop the spade and lift me
head to look again?
Was it blowing of the West wind or a bird-song true?
(Oh Red-breast, how you sang it till the bough beneath
you shook again.)
"Ah, Spring's come back to Kerry, lad, and all the
world's made new."

*Then it's "Hi Terry, Ho Terry, here's the open road
for you.*
*Leave the old men have the roof and hug the chim-
ney seat."*
*Then it's "Hi Terry, Ho Terry, here's a tinker's load
for you—*
*A ragged coat, a merry heart, and dancing in your
feet."*

Sure, all the little willow trees have on their veils o' green
again,
All the little, clacking brooks are urging as they run.
They're calling me, they're coaxing me, "O, follow now
we're seen again,
And Spring's come back to Kerry with the West wind
and the Sun."

Then it's, "Hi Terry, Ho Terry, here's a tinker's
meal for you—
The sound of singing fiddles at the cross roads the
day,
The lightest feet the parish round tripping through
the reel for you;
Ah, clap a primrose in your cap and throw the
spade away."

ONE FIGHT MORE

NOW, think you, Life, I am defeated quite?
More than a single battle shall be mine
Before I yield the sword and give the sign
And turn, a crownless outcast, to the night.
Wounded, and yet unconquered in the fight,
I wait in silence till the day may shine
Once more upon my strength, and all the line
Of your defences break before my might.

Mine be that warrior's blood who, stricken sore,
Lies in his quiet chamber till he hears
Afar the clash and clang of arms, and knows
The cause he lived for calls for him once more;
And straightway rises, whole and void of fears,
And arméd, turns him singing to his foes.

THE PENITENT

I COME to thee blind, despairing,
  I grope where I may not see:
Love, thou worker of miracles,
  Open my eyes for me.

I come to thee deaf, unheeding,
  Beggared of sound and voice:
Love, thou maker of marvels,
  Bid me hear and rejoice.

I come to thee shunned—a leper,
  Scorned in the sight of men:
Love, whose pardon is cleansing,
  Make thou me clean again.

Love, thou worker of miracles,
  Maker of marvels sweet,
Love, whose pardon is cleansing,
  These my tears on thy feet.

AMANTIUM IRÆ

LOVE hath querulous grown and sad—
We should have parted yesterday;
A wistful lass and a tender lad—
Pity it was we chose to stay.

Over-long was the joy we had—
Why we wearied what man may say?
Love hath querulous grown and sad—
We should have parted yesterday.

O, to have said when hearts were glad,
"Kiss me and go," as lovers may.
Now we sneer that the dream was mad,
Yawn and wonder and turn away.
Love hath querulous grown and sad—
We should have parted yesterday.

THE CLOISTERED ROSE

THE rose that grew in the nun's white window
Ever leaned to the close-shut pane,
And yearned and died—unsatisfied—
For touch of the sun and rain.

And the little novice kissed it, dead,
And the slow tears stung her hand;
But why she too its secret knew,
Ah, who may understand?

RESURGAM

WE doubted our God in secret,
We scoffed in the market-place,
We held our hearts from His keeping,
We held our eyes from His face;
We looked to the ways of our fathers,
Denying where they denied,
And we said as He passed, " He is stilled at last,
And a man is crucified."

But now I give you certain news
To bid a world rejoice:
Ye may crush Truth to silence,
Ye may cry above his voice,
Ye may close your ears before Him,
Lest ye tremble at the word,
But late or soon, by night or noon,
The living truth is heard.

We buried our God in darkness,
In secret and all affright;
We crept on a path of silence,
Fearful things in the night;
We buried our God in terror,
After the fashion of men;
As we said each one, "The deed is done,
And the grave is closed again."

But now I give you certain news
To spread by land and sea:
Ye may scourge Truth naked,
Ye may nail him to the tree,
Ye may roll the stone above Him,
And seal it priestly-wise,
But against the morn, unmaimed, new-born,
The living Truth shall rise!

THE BALLAD OF THE CROSS

MELCHIOR, Gaspar, Balthazar—
  Great gifts they bore and meet;
White linen for His body fair
  And purple for His feet;
And golden things—the joy of kings—
  And myrrh to breathe Him sweet.

It was the shepherd Terish spake,
  "Oh, poor the gift I bring—
A little cross of broken twigs,
  A hind's gift to a king—
Yet, haply, He may smile to see
  And know my offering."

And it was Mary held Her Son
  Full softly to her breast,
"Great gifts and sweet are at Thy feet
  And wonders king-possessed,
O little Son, take Thou the one
  That pleasures Thee the best."

It was the Christ-Child in her arms
  Who turned from gaud and gold,
Who turned from wondrous gifts and great,

From purple woof and fold,
And to His breast the cross He pressed
That scarce His hands could hold.

'Twas king and shepherd went their way—
Great wonder tore their bliss;
'Twas Mary clasped her little Son
Close, close to feel her kiss,
And in His hold the cross lay cold
Between her heart and His!

THE WOMAN'S THANKS

THERE is so much strong men are thankful for—
A nation's progress, or a slow strife's end;
And though I join my praise with theirs to-day,
Grave things are these I scarce can comprehend,
So vast are they;
And so apart, dear God, I pray Thee take
My thanks for these Thy little blessings' sake.

The little, common joys of every day,
My garden blowing in an April wind,
A linnet's greeting and the morning fall
Of happy sunshine through the opened blind,
The poplars tall
That guard my threshold, and the peace that falls
Like Sabbath stillness from my humble walls.

The little, simple joys that we forget
Until we lose them; for the lamp that lights
The pages of the books I love the best,
The hearth's red welcoming on winter nights,
The kindly jest
That moves within its circle, and the near
Companionship of those the heart holds dear.

The dear, accustomed joys we lightly take
  Too much for granted sometimes, as a child
    His father's gifts; and, so remembering,
  For these my thanks, for these my treasures piled,
    Each simple thing
Those wiser may forget, dear Father, take
My thanks for these Thy little blessings' sake.

A GHOST

TO-DAY I entertained a ghost—
And yet he came in live man's guise,
With ready hands to greet his host,
And living eyes.
I touched his hand and watched his smile,
I answered to the words he said,
And marveled, knowing all the while,
The man was dead.

For I had known him quick indeed,
With life of tears and life of mirth,
A living heart to beat and bleed,
A thing of earth.
And even I had watched him die
Seeing these live things quitting him,
As when a soul goes quietly
And eyes grow dim.

But this ghost looked with living eyes,
And this ghost's hand was warm to touch.
Perchance had I not been so wise,
Knowing too much,
I had not guessed what horror springs
When these unliving walk again,
Bereft of love and hate—such things
As make live men.

THE NEW MOON

[*A Wood in Ionia. Teleon and Chloe*]

TELEON

WHY do you shiver? Has the air grown chill?
Your hand seems almost lifeless in my hold—
Like some white flower frost hath touched to kill.

CHLOE

Is it your hand or mine that has grown cold?
Nay, let mine go. How silent is the night—
Dull as drugged slumber and as void of dreams.
Have you no speech?

TELEON

But yestermonth how bright
The moon was—like a hundred golden streams
Poured down at once from Heaven was its light.

CHLOE

You spoke not of it then; you only said—

TELEON

What said I? Ah, have you forgotten quite?

CHLOE

Why raise the ghosts of sweet words that are dead?
We have no words to-night, we only know
Something most exquisite and glorious
Has gone from us, who might not watch it go,
Leaving these empty, soulless shells of us,
Empty of feeling, as a stringless lute
Is dumb of music. And I know not why.

TELEON

I may not answer. All my heart is mute
Like a stunned thing. I only know that I
Am beggared of all bliss, who yesterday
Was as a king, who knew none kinglier
In joy of living and my right to say,
"Mine! Mine! the arms, the eyes, the mouth of her!"
Who took from me this wondrous heritage,
This birthright of desire?

CHLOE

Ah! ask me not.
What matters it that once in some gold age
Two dreamed and kissed and wondered—and forgot.

TELEON

Forgot! Will you forget?

CHLOE

It is my prayer.
The gods are kind. What profit may there be
In weaving withered garlands for one's hair—
Poor, scentless aftermaths of ecstasy!

TELEON

I crowned you once with flowers—poppies red
As a maid's mouth that waits her lover's kiss.

CHLOE

How your hands trembled!

TELEON

And the words you said?

CHLOE

"O Love, I ask no queenlier crown than this."
And there was silence for a little space.

TELEON

I saw the great tears gather to your eyes,
And then—

CHLOE

Why then, your kisses on my face.
Full noon it was, and over us the skies
Arched like the dome of some great temple, blue
As Venus' eyes; the sun, that flame that stirs
Ever upon her altar, and we two
High Priests, with all the birds for choristers.

TELEON

It was a holy spot wherein we stood.
Think you the path is lost?

CHLOE

Hark! Heard you?

TELEON

Yea,
Methought I heard a bird song in the wood—
A bird that wakens in a dream of day.

CHLOE

How wonderful his voice this moonless night!
There was a night I heard another song
Come through the wood like that; the world was white
With the new Spring; you had been absent long
On a far journey; and, too sad for fear,

I came alone to this our trysting place,
With little hope; when sudden, far and clear,
I heard your voice that sang, and all the space
Between us straight was bridged with melody
Whereon my heart met yours ere yet you came.
Yet seemed the coming over-long to me.

TELEON

I caught your hands in mine and said your name
Once only—and was dumb for very bliss.

CHLOE

How swift the night went by! How glad we were!
And in your hands my two hands lay like this.

TELEON

And thus I kissed you, lips and brow and hair.
Ah, but you tremble!

CHLOE

Hark! that bird anew.
Listen, nay listen, hear how loud he sings?

TELEON

Give me your hands.

CHLOE

Ah, but he sings not true.
That is a song of Spring's, a song of Spring's,
And this is Winter.

TELEON

Now, if Spring be gone,
She comes again, for in this heart of mine
A something breaks in blossom, and the sun
Thrills in my veins and stirs my blood like wine.

CHLOE

And I—I know not if to laugh or weep.
My heart is as a prisoned thing set free,
A wakened thing that starts new-born from sleep.
What means this joy?

TELEON

Look in my eyes and see.
How beautiful you are!

CHLOE

Nay, but my eyes
Are drowned in yours.

TELEON

Ah, closer—closer still.

CHLOE

Kiss from my lips their sacrilege and lies,
Ere this new bliss grow great enough to kill,
These lips that said, "I love no more!"

TELEON

But see!
What light is this?

CHLOE

Perchance that glad bird's tune
Made visible, fine gold.

TELEON

Nay, heart of me,
Lean from my arms and turn and look.

CHLOE

The Moon!

TELEON

The New Moon that is builded of the old,
The Old Moon born again into the New.

[*Silence*]

CHLOE

Its light hath crowned your head with very gold.

TELEON

There is no light could make your eyes more blue!

THE LAST SONG

I COME from a long journey and a sore,
My feet are bleeding where the thorns have pressed,
Yet have I passed by many an open door—
(Only within your arms may I find rest.)

I come from sound of little souls at play,
From empty laughter that may never cease,
From joys grown hideous and mirth grown gray—
(Only within your arms may I find peace.)

I come a wanderer who naught may bring
Of any gladness from the road he went,
Save one sad heart that cries your comforting—
(Only within your arms is my content.)

FEB 3 1922

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